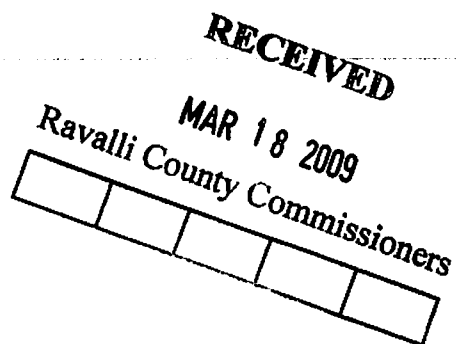


Glenda Wiles

From: jill davies [jill@sustainablelivingsystems.org]
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2009 12:02 PM
To: Jon Wickersham
Cc: Glenda Wiles
Subject: Re: Farmland mitigation memo



Jon -

Thanks for sending the Farmland Mitigation Memo, it was very interesting. I'm not sure how best to submit comments, but thought that sending this to the commissioners would be a start.

peace - Jill

To whom it may concern, regarding the Farmland Mitigation Issue:

If I may submit comments:

I would submit that our Community Food Assessment, an 18 page Summary of which is posted on this website: <http://www.bitterrootvalleyfood.info/assessment.html>, does address some of the work the Farmland Valuation Working Group could have done. Specifically, #2: "Research and outline problems and challenges facing valuable ag lands" (or I would say facing farmers on valuable ag lands).

Regarding the options for criteria to identify valuable farmland: Criteria should be based on prime and statewide important farmland soils in combination with long term, sustainable availability of irrigation water. There should be a rating system for various levels of water availability and the energy required to deliver it to the soil, with high pressure, gravity fed water scoring the highest. Combine this with a scoring system for soils to arrive at the *most valuable* ag lands. Other scores that could be worked in would be aspect and exposure to cold air flows coming down from the mountains.

The Planning Dept. could describe the limitations under current county subdivision regulations to protect prime ag lands. Some of this is already contained in this Memo. I'm not sure it is complete.

I agree with the Memo's final recommendation - to acquire land. However, I would add that title to the land should be placed in the hands of a **Community Land Trust (CLT)** - to hold title to good ag land and lease it at reasonable rates to farmers. A Community Land Trust is set up as a simple non-profit corporation, run by a democratically elected board of directors from the community. Its sole purpose is to hold title to land and put it to use for the benefit of the community, in this case, leasing it to farmers at a rate that allows the farmer to make a decent living with his products. For more about Community Land Trusts, see www.smallisbeautiful.org. The CLT could also solicit grants for acquiring land to augment the mitigation fees.

In addition, I feel it is imperative that the county establish rigorous farmland mitigation fees on developers, not just voluntary negotiated fees, (i.e. the value of 2 acres saved for every 1 acre developed) and use the funds to acquire title to prime ag land, title to be held by a Community Land Trust.

thanks for your time. - Jill Davies

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We make war with our brethren
and our environment
because we do not know our place
in the cosmos.